

UPPER YELLOWSTONE WATERSHED BASIN

MILL CREEK SUBCOMMITTEE

*April 18, 2008 - 1:00PM
St. John's Church, Emigrant*

-MINUTES-

People Present (26+)

Alan Redfield, Chairman
Elaine Hale, Vice Chair
Ron Archuleta, Forest Service
Marty Malone
Laura Melin
Jim Robinson, DNRC
Rankin Holmes
Dave Poncin
David Bowman
Eleanor Bossert
Lance Vines
Joan Watts
Gayleen Malone

Jacquie Nelson, Coordinator
Lynda Moss
Art Burns
Keith Neal
Lewis Wilks
Sharon Sweeney Fee, Joe Brook T.U.
Kerry Fee, Joe Brook T.U.
Riley Shimmin
Guy Schran
Turk Bossert
Dave Amman
Ryan Malone
Bob DePaso

Topics Covered:

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|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. GOVERNANCES/POLICIES | 5. JOE BROOKS TROUT UNLIMITED |
| 2. WATERSHED CONDITIONS | 6. OLD DITCH LIABILITY |
| 3. WATER MEASUREMENT PLANNING | 7. NEXT MEETING DATE |
| 4. MILL CREEK WATER DISTRICT FILES | 8. OPEN ITEMS |

Alan Redfield called the Mill Creek Subcommittee meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

1. GOVERNANCES/POLICIES

- In the future, the Mill Creek minutes will consist of a summary of the items discussed and decisions made.
- Any time decisions made by the Mill Creek Subcommittee have to go through the Upper Yellowstone Watershed Basin group (UYWB) in order to proceed. All UYWB decisions go through the Park Conservation District for final approval.
- Copies of the Upper Yellowstone Watershed Basin's By-Laws were available to anyone interested at the Mill Creek Subcommittee meeting.

2. WATERSHED CONDITIONS

- Livingston District Ranger, Ron Archuleta gave an update on behalf of the Forest Service about the Wicked Fire damage and rehabilitation efforts.
- Ron displayed a colorful map showing the many levels of intensity and severity of the fire damage up Mill Creek.
- The Mill Creek Burn Emergency Area Rehabilitation (BEAR) is work that will take place in the Mill Creek drainage after the fire.
- Ron made the decision to not seed the project area to prevent erosion because he believes seeding is not cost efficient or effective enough to stabilize the steep slopes.
- The Forest Service will be conducting water quality monitoring on Mill Creek from May 1 – July 18, 2008. They will be looking at the discharge, sediment, and bed load of Mill Creek and it's tributaries due to the fire. Ron will compare this data to data collected in 1993 and 1996.

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- The forest service received a total of \$500,000 for the BEAR this year. As of right now, this money will be used for replanting native vegetation, reduce noxious weeds, rebuilding bridges, ditches and culverts and restoring trails. Most of this work shall be completed this year.
- Ron will come to the UYWB meeting to present more plans for rehabilitation.
- There is a potential for a lot of run off this year on Mill Creek. There was a discussion about the effects of different rehabilitation efforts (i.e. seeding verses hydro-mulching).
- The following were documents provided by the Forest Service:
 - "Post-fire Erosion and the Effectiveness of Emergency Rehabilitation Treatments over Time" (MacDonald, 2008)
 - "Measuring effectiveness of three postfire hillslope erosion barrier treatments, western Montana, USA" (Robichaud, 2007)
 - "Effects of postfire seeding and fertilizing on hillslope erosion in north-central Washington, USA" (Robichaud, 2006)
 - "Postfire Seeding for Erosion Control: Effectiveness and Impacts on Native Plant Communities" (Beyers, 2004)

Copies of these handouts are available through Jacquie Nelson at the Park Conservation District office.

3. WATER MEASUREMENT PLANNING

- Jim Robinson discussed installing a flow monitoring network system in late June or July consisting of 8 water measurement stations at strategic points along the lower six miles of Mill Creek at the locations listed below:
 - No. 1 – Mill Creek East River Road
 - No. 2 – Paradise Canal at Mill Creek siphon
 - No. 3 – Mill Creek above Allen Sexton ditch
 - No. 4 – Allen Sexton ditch (existing parshall)
 - No. 5 – Mill Creek 1st bridge, Mill Creek Road
 - No. 6 – Pipeline Canal
 - No. 7 – Mill Creek, 2nd bridge, Mill Creek Road
 - No. 8 – Mill Creek, above pipeline intake
- The draft Reclamation States Emergency Drought Act Grant Application for Mill Creek written by Jim Robinson was reviewed and discussed by the Mill Creek Subcommittee.
- The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) funding request in the amount of \$20,000 would be for the installation and maintenance of two automated real-time stream flow monitoring station for the first two years of a five year contract with the US Geological Survey (USGS). The proposed stations would provide internet-accessible real-time flow information.
- The two proposed USGS gauges would be located on Mill Creek, above the major irrigation diversion and at the bottom of Mill Creek by the Paradise Canal.
- The possibility of using Snotel sites as monitoring devised was discussed. Jim Robinson will check into it before the next Mill Creek Subcommittee meeting.
- Art Burns made the motion to vote on whether to move forward with the idea to install and maintain automated real-time stream flow monitoring stations on Mill Creek. Kerry Fee seconded the motion and a show of hands vote was conducted. Results of the vote were 11 people for moving forward with the idea to install and maintain automated real-time stream flow monitoring stations on Mill Creek and 8 people against. Thus, it was passed to move forward with the idea to install and maintain automated real-time stream flow monitoring stations

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on Mill Creek, therefore handing it over to the UYWB to vote on. If passed, it would move to the Park Conservation District for the final decision. (Note: At the regular meeting of the Upper Yellowstone Watershed Basin on May 1, 2008 submittal of the application to USBR was not approved).

4. MILL CREEK WATER DISTRICT FILES

- It will be at the decision of the Mill Creek Water District board what to do with the Mill Creek files and where to store them.

5. JOE BROOKS TROUT UNLIMITED

- Kerry Fee and Sharon Sweeney Fee presented an update on behalf of the local Joe Brooks chapter of Montana Trout Unlimited. The Mill Creek Subcommittee was successful in receiving the MTU Mini-grant under a restricted line item of the MTU budget in the amount of \$3,510.00 for funding the subcommittee's communication and coordination services. An additional \$1,000 was donated from the Bozeman chapter of Trout Unlimited to help pay for Keith Neal's salary as a ditch monitor.

6. OLD DITCH LIABILITY

- The Mill Creek Subcommittee talked about headgates and ditches up Mill Creek that are abandoned and at the risk of being washed out. Jim Robinson would like to speak with Pat Riley, DNRC's Irrigation Engineer in Billings about headgate reclamation on Mill Creek and visit the sites to assess the abandoned irrigation structures.

7. NEXT MEETING DATE

- The next meeting is scheduled for July of 2008. The date, time and place will be announced. (Note: Meeting scheduled for August 14, 2008, 1-3 pm).

8. OPEN ITEMS

- The idea of forming the Mill Creek Subcommittee group was to make all Mill Creek issues and communication transparent and work together as a large group. On the contrary, a member of the Mill Creek Subcommittee stirred up some controversy when she sent out a packet regarding Mill Creek issues to a selective group. There was a debate within the Mill Creek Subcommittee regarding informal groups, interested parties and trust issues.
- The Mill Creek pipeline was discussed with regards to the Mill Creek Water District, money allocated, people that benefit from work done and the de-watering of Mill Creek.
- Kerry Fee announced that if anyone would like to donate money to the Mill Creek Subcommittee they can send their donation to Montana Trout Unlimited.
- If you have any communication contacts that you want added to the Mill Creek Subcommittee mailing list send them to Jacquie Nelson, 406-222-2899 ext.111 or Jacquie.nelson@mt.nacdnet.net.

Alan Redfield adjourned the Mill Creek Subcommittee meeting at 3:00 PM.